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BATTLE OF JERICHO HILL

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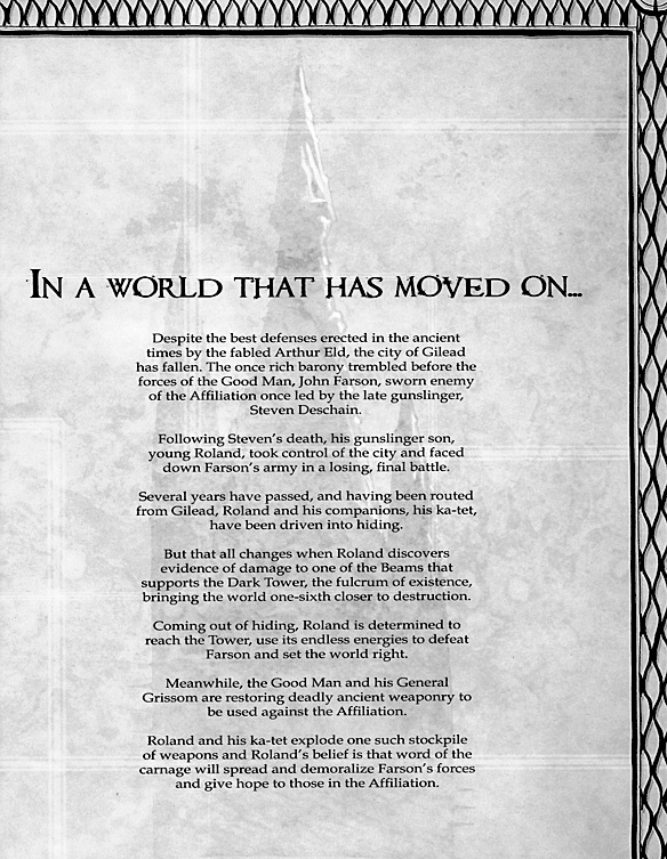
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IN A WORLD THAT HAS MOVED ON...

Despite the best defenses erected in the ancient times by the fabled Arthur Eld, the city of Gilead has fallen. The once rich barony trembled before the forces of the Good Man, John Farson, sworn enemy of the Affiliation once led by the late gunslinger, Steven Deschain.

Following Steven's death, his gunslinger son, young Roland, took control of the city and faced down Farson's army in a losing, final battle.

Several years have passed, and having been routed from Gilead, Roland and his companions, his ka-tet, have been driven into hiding.

But that all changes when Roland discovers evidence of damage to one of the Beams that supports the Dark Tower, the fulcrum of existence, bringing the world one-sixth closer to destruction.

Coming out of hiding, Roland is determined to reach the Tower, use its endless energies to defeat Farson and set the world right.

Meanwhile, the Good Man and his General Grissom are restoring deadly ancient weaponry to be used against the Affiliation.

Roland and his ka-tet explode one such stockpile of weapons and Roland's belief is that word of the carnage will spread and demoralize Farson's forces and give hope to those in the Affiliation.



See them well, this last bastion of defense against the forces of John Farson, the Good Man. They look like little, but hope to be so much more.

Speak to us, Benedict. Tell us what you have seen of that which opposes us.

I assure you, you are among friends here. Be not fearful.



Ya see me trembling and think it fear?

Well... yes.

You're lookin' at barely contained **rage** right here, Roland.

Rage that I lived long enough to see that bastard run wild.



As your forces retreat, his army masses to the south, slaughtering any what stands against him.

What I seen makes me wanna gouge out my mind's eye.

Less your Affiliation gets more men, you got no chance. None.



A few minutes later...

All these damned meetings do is bring our shortcomings into stark relief while no new assets present themselves.

Let...go, you poxy bitch!

Ah yes, Jamie, *that* will impress Farson's men if one of them has you at their mercy! Whiny name-calling.

Good day, Aileen. How does Jamie's training of you in self-defense?

Oh! Hello, Roland, I--

Seems you dropped your guard there, Aileen. Best watch that.

Oooooof!!

And thus does the secret to defeating you present itself! I just need to keep Roland in my hip pocket or a handy box.

And what box do *you* wish to keep him in, eh?

Shut up.





They're
talking about
me. I know it.

Probably trying
to make one final
effort to find
my family.



I do not
deserve
friends such
as these.

And if they
truly *knew*
me...

...they
would know
that.



And then he runs.
He runs for much
of the night.

He runs like John Farson
himself is at his heels...



...except Farson
ain't at his heels
at all...



...but instead
in his soul.



FATHER!!!

You're in it
now, you bastards!
My Father's here, and
he's going to give
you what for!



Edmund!
Edmund, have
they *hurt* you,
boy?!

Get...out
of my way, you
monstrosity!

You heard
the gentleman.
Release him.



Let him
have his
precious
reunion.

A black and white comic panel showing a man in a cage made of wooden beams. He is looking down at a woman lying face down on the floor. The man has a distressed expression.

Father, I...
I thought you
were never
going to--

It's all
going to be fine,
Edmund! I swear
to you!

Darling!
Wake up! I'm
here! I--

Why...
does she not
stir...?

A close-up black and white comic panel of a man's face. He has a wide-eyed, desperate, and sorrowful expression.

I'm...I'm so
sorry, father.
I...I tried to
protect her
from them...

I failed
her...failed
you...I...I'm so
sorry...

A close-up black and white comic panel of a woman's face. She has a cold, angry expression and is looking directly at the man.

You son
of a whore!
you killed my
wife!

A black and white comic panel showing a man in the lower left looking up at a woman whose face is partially visible in the upper right. The man has a somber expression.

I've done
all you asked
and yet you
killed her!

Why?!

Because,
Randolph...



You were
tardy.

Tardiness is
the sign of a sloppy
mind, and I simply
cannot *abide*
sloppiness.

Since you were
late, now your *Wife* is
late. And if you desire
not to have a late
son as well, then you
will henceforth be
more *punctual*.

Now:

Tell me all
you know of the
gunslinger's plans.
And be *quick* about
it because, as you
have *seen*...

...I have no
tolerance for
those who take
their time.

Yes, the vile touch of
John Farson is everywhere.
It's in the army massing
in the south...

...It's in a cave where his right hand,
Walter O'Dim, takes what bits of
Randolph's spirit remains and
grinds it beneath his heel...

...and it's here, in an arid region of
Mid-World, in the domain of the cult
of Amoco, where a crazed preacher's
words stoke the fires of his people's
hatred for anything that's not, well...

...not them.





Louder, my
beloved! Your
cries of joy and
devotion must
be louder...

...for the voice
of the god who resides
in this field is like unto
thunder, and he will
drown out our devotions
if we give anything
less than our all!



Bring forth the sacrifice!

Let *these* sheep represent the human sheep who cower before us...before our god...before our might....



...and let this be the fate that they will meet!



Oh Amoco, god of lightning and thunder, watching us from the holy killing fields...

Let this blood show the purity of our worship.



As we pour it upon your holy pump, become engorged with our love for you!

Do you people have any idea how sick and twisted you are? You worship pollution, sickness and death!

Ignore his calumnies, my friends! They are but desperate words of unbelievers!



Soon the
holy fire will
cleanse them of
their sins!

Or, failing
that, send them
screaming to the
hell they so richly
deserve!



Either one
works!

And their deaths
will be a warning to
all who seek to destroy
the home of all-seeing,
all-knowing Amoco, for
whom we are the
standard-bearers!





Do you hear that? The sound of drums in the distance and...

...something burning.

Whatever it is, Roland, perhaps we should take our twenty new recruits and head the other way. It may be too soon to...



It's never too soon to see if Farson's forces are up to something.

Jamie...

I'll attend to it, Roland.



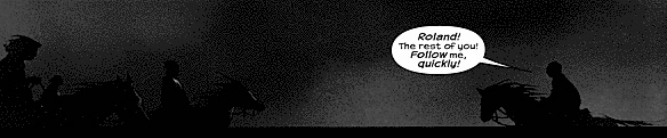
Jamie De Curry is one of the best of Roland's scouts.



A shadow during an eclipse has a better chance of being spotted when stealth is required.



Oh my God...



Roland!
The rest of you!
Follow me, quickly!



Okay.
Well...

...*this* takes
insanity to an
entirely new
level.



We've already hurt Farson
back when we blew up the
Kambry oil field. If we torch
this place, it will damn near
castrate him.

Let's see
him run his death
machines fueled
by piss and
vinegar.



I agree. We
rescue those
caged men and
destroy the
oil rigs...



"...and if those lunatics
go up in flames with them,
I'll be shedding no tears."

Can you
sense our god
crouching,
listening,
waiting for his
sacrifice?



He shall
be made to wait
no longer!

Ahhhh! You
lunatic!!!!



Oh God...
he's...he's
really going
to--

God in
heaven, kill
this bastard!
Now!

BLAM



Wow.
Uhm...

Thank you,
God.



Nice shot,
Roland.

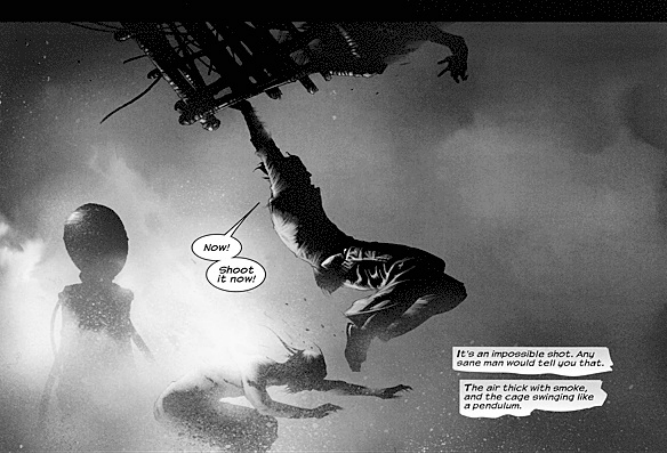
On my signal,
shoot the rope
supporting
that cage!



How are we
supposed to do
that?! I can't
see a damned
thing!

Roland, wait
for the *wind*
to clear the
smoke!

Roland!



Now!
Shoot
it now!

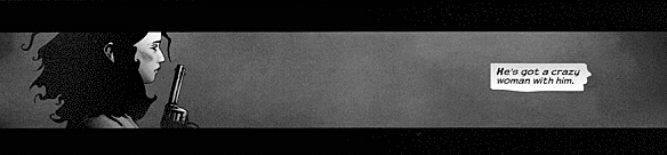
It's an impossible shot. Any sane man would tell you that.

The air thick with smoke, and the cage swinging like a pendulum.



Like I said, any sane man would say it simply couldn't be done.

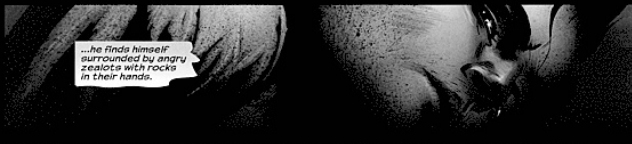
Except, lucky for Roland...

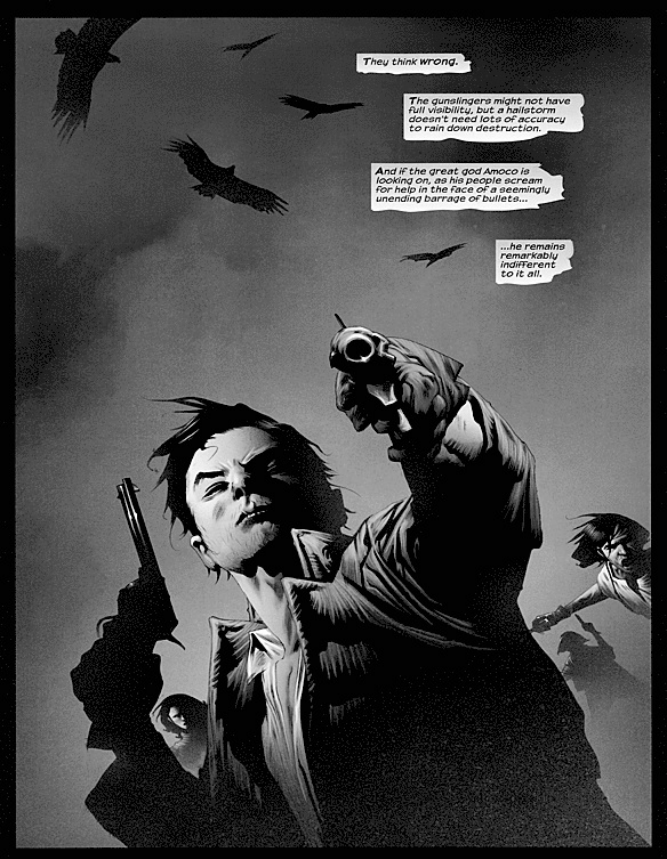


He's got a crazy woman with him.



BLAM





They think wrong.

The gunslingers might not have full visibility, but a hailstorm doesn't need lots of accuracy to rain down destruction.

And if the great god Amoco is looking on, as his people scream for help in the face of a seemingly unending barrage of bullets...

...he remains remarkably indifferent to it all.



That was stimulating.

Did you know I made the shot that freed the prisoners?

I couldn't see a damned thing, but if you say so.

What do you mean, W?

So you came from Kingstown...?

Or what's left of it, thanks to Farson, and that ain't much.



We figgered the one hand we had left to play was to blow up this oil field.

Brought dynamite and everything, but got caught afore we could use it.



You have explosives, did you say? Well, then...

"...let's put them to good use."



Roland, did I tell you I made the shot that cut down the cage?

There were lots of bullets flying, but if you say so.

i hate men.



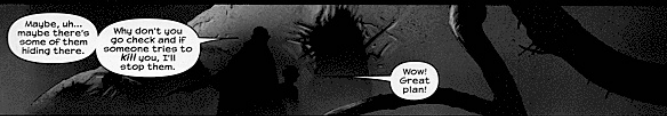
But even as Roland and his ka-tet celebrate their triumph at the oil fields...



...back at the Affiliation camp, Randolph and Sheemie are on patrol 'round the camp, wandering rather far from the usual run...

You thinking that the badsters would be way out here?

Anything's possible, Sheemie.



Maybe, uh... maybe there's some of them hiding there.

Why don't you go check and if someone tries to kill you, I'll stop them.

Wow! Great plan!



It's him! Randolph, it's him!

Go be the hero, Sheemie. You deserve it.

Don't you be worrying, Edmund! It's Sheemie to the res--

--cue?



Randolph!
Help me!

My dear boy,
he's already
helped you more
than enough.

Is that
not right,
Randolph?



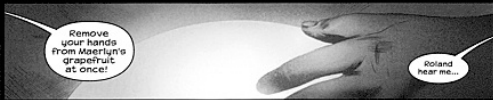
My, my! Nothing
to say, for once?
And here you were
so chatty in
our previous
encounters.

Skacchht



You said
you weren't
going to hurt
him!

Not in the
long term, no.
He's far too
valuable.



Jae Lee's original pencils for this issue's cover.



NEXT: An Affiliation falls...

